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Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6745th meeting

Wednesday, 4 April 2012, noon

New York

President:	Mr. DeLaurentis	(United States of America)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Germany	Mr. Eick
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Crowley
	Togo	Mr. Mbeou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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The meeting was called to order at 12.20 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Council for the month of April 2012, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of March 2012. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Lyall Grant and his delegation for the great skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the forcible seizure of power from the democratically elected Government of Mali by some elements of the Malian armed forces, and recalls in this regard its press statement of 22 March 2012 and its presidential statement of 26 March 2012. The Council calls on the mutineers to ensure the safety and security of all Malian officials and demands the immediate release of those detained. The Council renews its call for the immediate restoration of constitutional rule and the democratically elected Government and for the preservation of the electoral process.

"The Security Council supports the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which issued communiqués on 27 and 29 March 2012, and commends the work of President Blaise Compaoré, as ECOWAS facilitator, in promoting the return to full civilian authority and the effective re-establishment of constitutional order in Mali. The Council also commends the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and of the African Union in this regard and takes note of the announcement of the mutineers to restore constitutional rule as of 1 April 2012. The Council expects the mutineers to take immediate steps to effectively implement this commitment and will follow developments closely.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the continued attacks, looting and seizure of territory carried out by. rebel groups in the north of Mali and demands an immediate cessation of hostilities. The Council is alarmed by the presence in the region of the terrorist group Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which could lead to a further destabilization of the security situation. The Council calls upon the rebels to immediately cease all violence and urges all parties in Mali to seek a peaceful solution through appropriate political dialogue. The Council stresses the importance of the safety of civilians and of the respect of human rights.

"The Security Council reaffirms the need to uphold and respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Mali.

"The Security Council renews its serious concern over the insecurity and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Sahel region.

"The Council commends efforts of humanitarian organizations involved and calls on all parties in Mali to allow timely, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid to civilians in need, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, and guiding principles of emergency humanitarian assistance. The Council calls for an increased mobilization of the international community to support humanitarian efforts.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the risk posed by fighting to Mali's World Heritage sites.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to update it, as appropriate, on

developments in Mali and will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/9.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Daou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor at this meeting. As you know, my country, Mali, is currently undergoing one of the direst moments of its history. Our people today is suffering deeply, reeling and lost, but we have not lost all hope. I am certain that my people will be able to join forces across the nation to overcome the challenges we face.

Mali has never been in a worse situation. Not even in our worst nightmares could we have imagined our current suffering. The situation is indescribable and unprecedented. We have never experienced its like. Nowhere in the world has such a situation been seen; even a precedent might have helped us to overcome the depths of despair.

Even as I speak, our people is divided and our country threatened with partition. Northern Mali is today occupied by Tuareg rebels and Salafists. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons are living in unimaginable conditions. As the adage says, bad luck never arrives alone. Mali is today ostracized by the international community. This is the first time we have found ourselves in this position. We have never experienced such a situation before.

How did our country get to this point? Only a few weeks ago, we were known and held up as a beacon and a country where the democratic model had taken root, and were often cited as an exemplar for the African continent. How is it that today our country finds itself ostracized by the international community, torn apart, having lost its status and even subject to embargo?

I do not wish here to go into the profound causes of this situation; to do so would take too much time. I believe that I will have the opportunity to retrace that history on another occasion. I commend you, Sir, and the Council for having provided us with this opportunity to speak and for having adopted today's presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/9) on the painful situation, the institutional and security crises and the humanitarian challenges in my country.

Today, as I said, the people of Mali is divided, occupied and beset by serious institutional problems that have led us to be ostracized by the international community. We ask the Security Council to help Mali find a way out of the current crisis. It is a critical time, and the challenges are both numerous and complex. Today, it is a matter of survival.

I think that, today, the international community is speaking in a single voice with regard to a return to constitutional order, the elections and the condemnation of the coup, but the reality on the ground is indescribable. What we seek today is to help Mali to get back on its feet. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has imposed sanctions on Mali, and we understand that. We are full-fledged members of ECOWAS and the African Union. However, I have to say that it is the first time that we have seen such sanctions imposed on a member State under particularly difficult conditions.

At a time when we have hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons; when our territorial integrity is severely threatened; when the north is occupied; when there are all kinds of threats; when the populations in the occupied north are in complete distress, and when, in the southern part of the country, there has been a schism since the 22 March coup; and when there is all kinds of scheming by young politicians, is this the time to close our country's borders and to leave the people further thirsty and hungry? I believe that ECOWAS and the African Union should not exacerbate the situation that we are currently experiencing. To the contrary, at this time they should help us find a way forward.

The military officers who undertook the coup have asked to sit down with essential national forces — all our country's stakeholders, political parties and civil society — in order to seek a national consensus that could lead to the country finding its footing and accepting the minimal solution to emerge from this situation. I would therefore appeal to the Council to help Mali to emerge from the situation.

The President: There are no more names on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.